FACILITATION (FAL) DIVISION — TWELFTH SESSION

Cairo, Egypt, 22 March to 2 April 2004

Agenda Item 2: **Facilitation and security of travel documents and border control formalities**
 2.5: **Implementation of aviation security**

SCREENING OF PASSENGERS AND THEIR BAGGAGE

(Presented by the Secretariat)

1.   **INTRODUCTION**

1.1   The passenger experience at an airport is coloured by the actions of many parties — the airport authority, airlines, security staff, government agencies and retail concessions. It is clear in principle, but rarely achieved in practice, that all these parties should cooperate to ensure the best experience possible for the passenger.

1.2   Annex 17, Standard 4.3.1. "Each Contracting State shall establish measures to ensure that originating passengers and their cabin baggage are screened prior to boarding an aircraft engaged in international civil aviation operations.", and Standard 4.3.2 "Each Contracting State shall ensure that transfer and transit passengers and their cabin baggage are subjected to adequate security controls to prevent unauthorized articles from being taken on board aircraft engaged in international civil aviation operations.".

1.3   The basic rule is that all passengers and all their carry-on baggage must undergo screening before being allowed access to an aircraft, sterile area or security restricted area. This procedure must be applied to all international flight operations and whenever practically possible to all domestic operations. This is especially necessary when screened passengers for international flights and non-screened domestic operations passengers have contact after the passenger screening point. Similar screening requirements should be applied to all other persons, including flight and cabin crew, requiring access to security restricted areas containing screened passengers or access to aircraft.

2.   **PASSENGER FLOW AND SECURITY SCREENING**

2.1   Security measures at airports, if not properly managed, can have an adverse impact on the flow of departing passengers. Increased processing time is often required to handle each passenger in an enhanced security environment, which can include screening and physical searching of both cabin and hold baggage. Often the situation is exacerbated by the fact that security procedures are taking place in airport facilities that were not designed to accommodate them.

2.2   **Actions to improve passenger flows**

2.2.1   Thorough screening of passengers and their baggage requires well trained security staff, sufficient security equipment and the allocation of enough time for the security process to be completed. When security checks are not conducted in an efficient manner, the on-time performance of aircraft operations may be adversely affected. Moreover, the resulting congestion at control points may be exploited by persons intent on circumventing the system to the detriment of security. Problems typically relate to the denial of some basic human needs, for example, the need to be treated with respect, the need to know what is going on and why, the need to know how long the process will take, and the need to have a comfortable environment.

2.2.2   It must also be borne in mind that the average air passenger is already in an unfamiliar, uncontrollable and (to some) threatening environment. It must be remembered that virtually everybody travelling by air is at some heightened level of mental activity, be that anticipation, excitement, fear or even depression. The potential for atypical behaviour (e.g. abusive language, queue jumping) is exacerbated in the airport environment, even in those persons not normally prone to such actions. Add lengthy processing times, poorly managed queues, unfamiliar procedures and heavily armed personnel to that latently volatile situation, and the potential is heightened for more people to be dissatisfied and to express that dissatisfaction inappropriately.

2.2.3   While the security process can often not be reduced, there are some simple steps that can be taken to improve the experience for passengers. In many instances, these steps require little in the way of equipment and staff — just a better understanding of what the passengers are experiencing. The aim should be to create a feeling of calm and that the security processes are being conducted fairly and professionally. Otherwise the security process will build anxiety rather than alleviate it.

2.2.4   Many passengers will want to know what they can do to make the processes work more efficiently. This is not just self-serving in terms of improving their own particular experience, but often derives from a deeper commitment to wanting to achieve a more secure aviation system. This desire to help should be utilized and certainly not abused or discounted since altruism will soon disappear in the face of continual frustration.

2.2.5   The adoption of the following simple principles and practices by States can change the experience of passengers and contribute to a more efficient and less onerous security screening process.

2.3   **Staff**

2.3.1   A fundamental factor in getting people through security checkpoints quickly is the provision of sufficient, trained security screening staff. Training should not only include the necessary technical skills, but also customer service skills and basic conflict resolution skills.

2.3.2   Have roaming, knowledgeable, and clearly identifiable information staff available in the screening area queues to answer people's questions and provide as much advance information as possible to queuing passengers, for example, reminding them to have a boarding pass and travel documents ready, to have (or prepare to have) laptop computers removed from their bags prior to X-raying, emphasizing to passengers what is and is not allowable in carry-on.

2.3.3   Where physical checking of passengers is required, ensure that personnel of the same sex carry this out.

2.4　Equipment

2.4.1　　　　Installation of sufficient security screening equipment to handle expected passenger traffic flows is paramount, and standby equipment should be available which can be quickly brought on line in case of equipment failure.

2.5　Space

2.5.1　　　　Sufficient space should be available in which to conduct screening. Although many existing airport environments were not designed with excess space to handle enhanced security screening and their associated queues, there might be opportunities to look at doing things differently. Centralization of security screening provides a far better utilization of both equipment and manpower resources, and a greater capability to respond to peaks in demand. Questions that should be asked include: Does the screening have to be conducted at that location? Is there more space elsewhere that could be developed? Can the checkpoints and equipment be staggered, rather than laid out in a conventional "comb" configuration?

2.6　Queue management

2.6.1　　　　Use a single queue rather than individual queues in front of each screening checkpoint and have staff at the head of the queue directing passengers to the next available checkpoint. Unless told, the typical passenger has no way of judging how long it will take to negotiate a queue. When this time is known, anxiety over missing a flight departure may be relieved. Information should be provided by the use of signs that state how long a passenger can expect to wait from a certain point, for example, "ten minutes wait from this point".

2.6.2　　　　Consider providing trays or clear plastic bags to passengers approaching the head of the queue so that they can already prepare to divest themselves of metallic items such as coins, pens, glasses, keys, mobile phones, etc., in advance, rather than when they get to the head of the queue. Such trays/bags can be in dispensers with simple instructions on their purpose and use and could be funded as a concession advertising opportunity. The advantage of clear plastic bags in particular is that passengers can then take them away from the security checkpoint directly, thereby reducing downstream congestion caused when passengers block the exit flow while they replace pens, coins, glasses, etc., into a variety of pockets.

2.7　Problem passengers

2.7.1　　　　Passengers with problems should be dealt with away from the main queue. Once other passengers in the queue perceive that one passenger with, for example, an untraceable metal object on the person or in baggage, is occupying the time of the checkpoint staff, that person can become the focus of anger or frustration. If such problem passengers are quickly taken aside, the other passengers feel that all screening staff resources are once again available to process them.

2.8　Environment

2.8.1　　　　The introduction of a separate security channel for elderly passengers, passengers with disabilities, and families with young children, as well as bona fide late passengers should be considered. Where such channels are provided, they should be clearly signed giving the categories of people eligible, as well as details of the accepted flights for bona fide late passengers. However, such channels must be properly controlled to prevent misuse by non-eligible passengers who may simply be trying to circumvent the normal security channels.

2.8.2　　　　Giving passengers something to do while they are waiting can reduce stress. Providing good lighting and ventilation, music, water coolers, airport magazines, newspapers or travel information at strategic points in the queue will make the wait seem shorter and more bearable.

2.9   **Privacy**

2.9.1   Where hold or cabin baggage must be physically searched, ensure that this is done with care, sensitivity and privacy, so that the contents of a passenger's baggage are not open to general viewing by other passengers. A simple way to achieve this is to have inspection tables with vertical partitions high enough to prevent overlooking and lips around the edges so that any loose items do not roll off and cause further delay.

3.   **LATEST DEVELOPMENTS**

3.1   The Council of ICAO, at the second meeting of its 171st Session on 18 February 2004, considered a report on acts of unlawful interference which had occurred in the year 2003 and agreed, *inter alia,* that the following aviation security recommendation, developed in the light of analysis, be communicated to all Contracting States:

> a) States are encouraged to consider appropriate measures to **reduce the number of passengers queuing within terminal buildings**, since they represent a potential target for perpetrators. **Implementation of biometrics** for immigration, **random checks** and **two-tier security screening for passengers** should be studied with a view to reducing the burden of systematic, low-quality security controls applied to passengers while improving the quality and efficacy of high-level security screening only on selected passengers.

Appropriate security authorities of Contracting States were urged to take action on this recommendation.

4.   **ACTION BY THE DIVISION**

4.1   The Division is invited to note the information in this paper, in particular the recommendation contained in paragraph 3.1 and recommend that it be taken into account when developing/amending the Standards and Recommended Practices contained in Annex 9.

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